16 Feb 1919

The Snowdrops are lovely; I daresay I shall come to Streatham in a week or 10, & might then see you. How near you may we

Hogarth
Sunday

rettle — & is there any house possible?

919

Dearest,

Nelly has come back in the highest spirits having enjoyed herself immensely. In fact I see that I ought to have made a condition that you shouldn't tedna her by your charms. I fully expect a week of the most odious comparisons between you & us — & I daresay she'll end by giving notice - or at any rate make herself & Lottie miserable by wondering whether they wouldn't be happier with you. Anyhow, you need have no fear that the writ ~~she'll be~~ she is ready to go to you next time. She makes out that you don't like Crane, or that Crane won't do anything outside her work. If Crane is intolerable, I believe I could get you someone here. The registry seems the most respectable of all I've seen, & being so near I can bombard her, & have people sent round directly. To let me know. The things I paid were £1.10. for the children's boots; £1. to Crane, for the week when she was engaged & sent off; & 12/6 fee to Abbeys for engaging her. Together they come to £3.2.6. Let me know if I can do anything about the Store. From Nelly's account you don't have a moment to yourself, while I'm here is the most exhausting life under the sun.

Duncan gave us a delicious meal at Verrey's — a most distinguished place. I never saw a more remarkable figure than that adorable man — dressed in a non conformist minister's coat; but under that

an astonishing mixture of red waistcoats & jerseys, all so loose that they had to be hitched together by a woollen belt, & braces looping down somewhere quite unseen. He is more & more like a white owl perched upon a branch & blinking at the light. & shuffling his soft furry feet in the snow - a wonderful creature, you must admit, though how he ever gets through life — but as a matter of fact he gets through it better than anyone. Did I tell you how Sickert is a great painter? In fact he's now my ideal painter. I should like to possess his works. for the purpose of describing them. Duncan will hate stripped London bare of gossip. I can't think of anything - save that Clive & I had a long & intimate conversation chiefly about my writings at Vence, while Mary paid a visit to Hutch in a home; - I thought him delightful & got some compliments, & some raps on the knuckles from Mary, & he liked her; & she was tremendously modest & sympathetic. & we walked all through Soho in a state of semi-intoxication, recalling the past, - chattering like a cage full of parrokeets. I'm afraid I've quarrelled with Katherine Mansfield, a Mimless; which makes me think that those young women with all their charm are as brittle as barley sugar. Saxon is has not that drawback anyhow. She is persistent & loyal but rather in the manner of an undertaker; at least he makes me slightly dismal, especially when he insists upon my inviting him & Barbara to dinner. They're coming to night - B. sets 2 hours off from feeding the Baby; she already has the voice, on the telephone, of the Madonna. there's an indescribably goodness about it. Old Mother Bell never went in much for that; no; her maternity is of the tigress kind - splendid, devouring, unscrupulous. Murry has been made editor of the Athenaeum.

L.V.B.

NYPL
HAMILL 12/29/64

18 Feb?

Tuesday Hogarth. 1919

Dearest,

I'm afraid it wounds as if Crane had done little or nothing to solve the difficulty. But it's the absence of news that distresses me. Wouldn't it be as well for me to get into touch with Morell or Noel, or shan't I go to some registry or institute devoted to Nurses? Nothing could be easier for me. Do let me try if you are still without a prospect – or interview a person any possibility. I believe, too, I could replace Crane by a Speyer bird if you liked. The worst is the charge there Registries now make – Mrs Stuart asks £1. for anyone.

I had great compunction about having
Nelly back, & so had she about
coming. She has offered to go
down whenever we can spare her -
My difficulty, as you can probably
guess, is that I don't much like
upsetting Leonard, & of course it is
rather upsetting - NYPL not that Hattie
didn't manage perfectly this time, but
she isn't very dependable, & may
at any moment rush into one of her
tempers. You've made a complete
conquest of Nelly; "such a taking way
with her", she says; & we're the
nicest pair of ladies she's ever known.
The drawback though to devoted
domestics is the expense. I find our
books have jumped to £5- a week -
for no perceptible reason. We
then spend our entire income &
more on house keeping; & there seems
no reason for it. According

to Nelly we have about twice as
much to eat as you do — indeed
her account of your meagre meals
desolated me; but I suppose La B.
(do tell me all her eccentricities) is
trying to economise. Nelly, by the
way, formed a very high opinion of
Jenny, thought her highly
moral clean & with the
makings of a good cook.

But I'm only writing to offer
my services about the nurse:
they are sincerely intended.
I'm now very well, & as we
take our temperatures on the
least pretence I don't think we

shall get the flu this time. I hope
Duncan is better: & say how Jem
& Susanna are. She has hair
like mine, Nelly says. I'm
longing to examine her points.

NYPL

Alys is coming to tea, & I will
extract some gossip & let you have
it. I rather expect some dramatic
development; a suspect that she may
wish to confide in me. I
think there must have been a
crisis with James. He is
alone at Widmerpool, & will be
away for some time. She has
taken the London sky home. & is
as sepulchral as a toad in a hole.

B.

HAMILL 12/30/69

Mums address is, 2 ~~East Heath Rd~~ Portland Villas, East Heath Rd.
Hampstead.

I think you'd better not say anything to Nelly about my writing, "If you should be writing to her — not that it much matters. Only I want to keep out git.

Hogarth.
Monday.
24 Feb 1919

1919

Dearest,

I think it's useless for either you or me to say anything.

Nelly showed me your letter to her this morning, & it led to considerable talk. Indeed ever since she returned she's been thinking she ought to have stayed with you, as I knew she would. Some days ago I suggested that she should go back to you, until you got a nurse. However Lottie then said she felt too lonely by herself here, & the work was too hard. They have been quarrelling together the whole week about it. Nelly laid the whole thing before me this morning. She feels that she ought to go to you because you want her so much & she likes you so much; but if so Lottie must come too, & as this would be unfair to us, they would have to leave us & go to you permanently. They don't know whether they want to do this — in short, it's the old story over again. I have taken up the position that I refuse to either to persuade them to stay or to persuade them to go.

Mean while, Budge's funny man never turned up on the wedding day, & it's thought he has gone for ever. Budge is in a great taking, so

that it wouldn't be wise to approach her now, but I suppose later
she'll take a place. Anny Boyce has written to me to
say that she knows two temporary people at the
moment. Leonard saw Mrs Squire yesterday, who says
that Mrs Hunt has several temp. nurses on her books,
but they ask 25/ a week, which Mrs Squire can't
afford. Shan't I try & see what can be done? The
position with N. & L. is so obscure that I don't in the
least know what to make of it. When your letter came
with all its thanks & compliments Nelly felt that she
must make up her mind to go to Jan – but then, next
minute she turns round & wants me to stay & say that I
find her indispensable. However, as they couldn't do
for a month, I suppose, its not much help to you at
present; & I see you say that you are getting very
tired. I'm sure its a desperate thing to attempt
both feeding & nursing – All those ounces are sucked off
you, though I'm very glad they go to Insanna – still –
What a hellish business it all is! We are
coming to Arbeham on Friday till Monday. I'll
& come over for the day anyhow one of the days –
We might then decide on some plan. But I'm
pretty sure nurses can be got easier than other
maids. I've collected a good deal of gossip,

NYPL

24 Feb 19

but domestic details swallow up my juice like sand.
Chiefly for your benefit I went to a concert & tea
party yesterday, & sat between Sir Valentine Chirol,
Katie, & Sir Henry Newbolt. I walked with Sir
Henry to the concert, & with Katie back again. Then
there's the home to describe to you. But the pen falters.
It faces the stuffed beasts. Inside they have a
complete collection of autotypes of the dutch school —
old women in white bonnets — Rembrandt heads — all
chocolate brown in gilt frames. This is on the
staircase. The drawing room has gilt mirrors
triangular shaped, several important oil sea scapes, &
heads of horses, to the shoulder, & in water colour
on little easels. There are photographs of soldiers &
babies on every prominence. Sir Henry smelt me
very suspiciously at first. He has the appearance of a
grey weasel, tapering to a point at both ends.

"I never listen to music, but I think my own
thoughts," he said. "I see things. I find it very
difficult to write poetry without hearing music —
yes. Mr. Woolf, probably something will come
of this — something almost always does come of a
concert —"

"Surely you ought to keep a quartet", I said —

which I thought a very pretty compliment; & I see I could there in South Kensington, which I don't believe either you or Duncan could do. They have a simplicity which is very engaging — they don't hunch up in corners, like Mummy, & say nothing. Bruce & Elena are infinitely polite. And yet I wonder how far one could go — I feel like a rabbit, who's really a hare, or a lawn with other rabbits, who are really rabbits. Or is this my conceit? Anyhow, Sir Valentine & Katie are full of doubts about the future. "For myself, I'm a fatalist," said Katie. "We may be shot at any moment — anyhow we shall all be shot together." "But why?" I asked. "Who's going to shoot you?" "O the Jews — the Russian Jews," she replied. "Yes, said Sir Val, Nobody can accuse me of being a pacifist, but after 4 years of war the people are not the same people they were. We shall never see 1914 again: They're wrung up — they're unreasonable — they want higher wages — & as Lady Cromer says, there are the Jews, the Russian Jews. There are Jews in every great town — colonies of them. They will supply the motive power, a — once the shooting begins — well, I'm a fatalist too, like Lady Cromer." I almost proclaimed myself a Russian Jew, but I'm keeping this for the next concert. And tonight I dine with Otto Kahn — God knows why he's sent for me. We dine in a hotel in Pall Mall. I could go to a Registry on Thursday if you let me know.

Yrs TS.

NYPL

HAMILL 12/29/69

27 Feb 1919?

1919

Thursday. Hogarth.

Dearest,

To revert for one moment to the domestic business — I didn't in the least wish to hint that you had influenced Nelly unfairly — I was only a little bewildered as to what had happened. Apparently nothing whatever — At least she's now back again when she was.

I'm only writing to say that I very much want to see you & the small white owl (wasn't that a good phrase of mine about Duncan 2.) but I find that Leonard thinks the walk two far; & therefore would it be possible to take me a bed for Tuesday night at Bo Peep 2. Let me have a line at Arlcham to say the name & the farmer — proper address & I will write to him. Don't attempt putting me up. I shall come over to lunch on Tuesday. You may be surprised to hear that I want to see Owlina almost as much as you — the habit & course your demonstrative ways, or flood of eloquence, but I'm told her silence is profoundly mysterious, & she looks about 20 as to

melt the marrow. Besides I want to set on foot a scheme of mine which I may tell you is to capture her mind from the first as to her maternity; she is going to think me something more than an Aunt – not quite a father perhaps, but with a hand (to put it delicately) in her birth. I warn you I shall drop hints at every opportunity. I have a great feeling for my nephews too. You have promised to send them here again, remember. Gossip is what you want, though: & I liked my little compliment, though it comes much easier to me to write letters than to find Crones. Lord! Lord! what a lot we could say about servants still! An inexhaustible subject! Why, this very morning your picture of St Ives bay fell off the wall on to Lottie's head & she went off into a dead faint, & was only recovered by making me & Leonard both feel her bump. My dinner with Ottoline was a frigid success. The poor woman has broken out into eruptions which she tries to make dramatic by parting pieces of black plaster on them – but they fade at the edges. It's a terrific business whipping her into life now. One has to bow & scrape & do all sorts of antics. I implore her to talk on the history of her life from the beginning before she will set up steam at all. She fishes for compliments worse than I do – I mean resticent that airy certainty which is so adorable in me that there is no limit to one's

27 Feb

those 2 one has merely to shake the tree for them to fall thick as apple blossom in May. The shakes the tree — oh yes, — However, I did my best; & when she said that I dressed so beautifully that I made her feel older & uglier than ever, I said "My dear Ottoline, like the Lombardy poplar you have only to stand up naked to put us all to shame." She liked that. But still she is fundamentally suspicious of us ah, I'm afraid, & goes ravening like a dog about Bloomsbury. She insisted upon walking from the Strand to Gordon Square in a bitter wind merely to see your wretched cockatoo & sat a little & the strong wind & the male, when she felt me flagging. She now walks gaily as Queen Alexandra is said to do; & her mind vapours off about friendship & love & literature — "I could never love anyone who does not care for literature — that is my cross - my refuge, Virginia - when people are cruel - & they are so cruel sometimes - And I suffer so terribly - my back gives me agonies - my feet are swollen with chilblains, & I am always, always tired. What would I not give to be able to work as you do - to create - to be an artist — " imagine crossing Holborn with this Dribbling out, as pacifully as two old witches on crutches. Of course, her character has an element of the serpent: there's no denying it. The has swooped down upon Rosa Alatini, the authoress

27 Feb

of despaired & Rejected, had her to tea that afternoon & sucked from her the history of her illicit amour, so that at last Rosa Allatini put up her hands, turned deathly white & said "I'm afraid I'm about to faint — I've eaten nothing all day —" upon which Ott: burst a bag of bath buns which she happened to have by her & fed her with them until she was recovered. But Allatini won't do — she is a disagreeable creature. On the other hand, the wife of Lord Henry's agent in Westmorland is a "wonderful, very sympathetic, very literary, & most cultivated woman" married to a husband who's sole interest lies in tapping drain pipes; & Ott: is going to bring her to see me; & hopes I will give her advice about her novel, which is full of exquisite touches, but terribly, terribly sad. Now all this seems to me to be a cut above the Barbaras, & in particular the Faiths, who sit in Hampstead doing nothing but pick little holes in all our characters like so many magpies. I don't see any point in being a magpie if you haven't got a brain. Still this doesn't apply to our Barbara, who is nicer than ever; & really otherwise hit her off rather exactly as the image of a respectable barmaid, pulling handles behind a counter, as fresh as a rose. The Hill frisks into the room, but she is fundamentally

I can't think why I'm writing you

Ledata.

this enormous letter. By the way, Henry Lamb is on our tracks, without success so far, & has sent a message to Ott: through Anrep, to say that he does not mean to renew his acquaintance with her, or with any of his old friends – why he expects us, I dont know.

I rather like Griselda – light & fantastic.

Nerissa

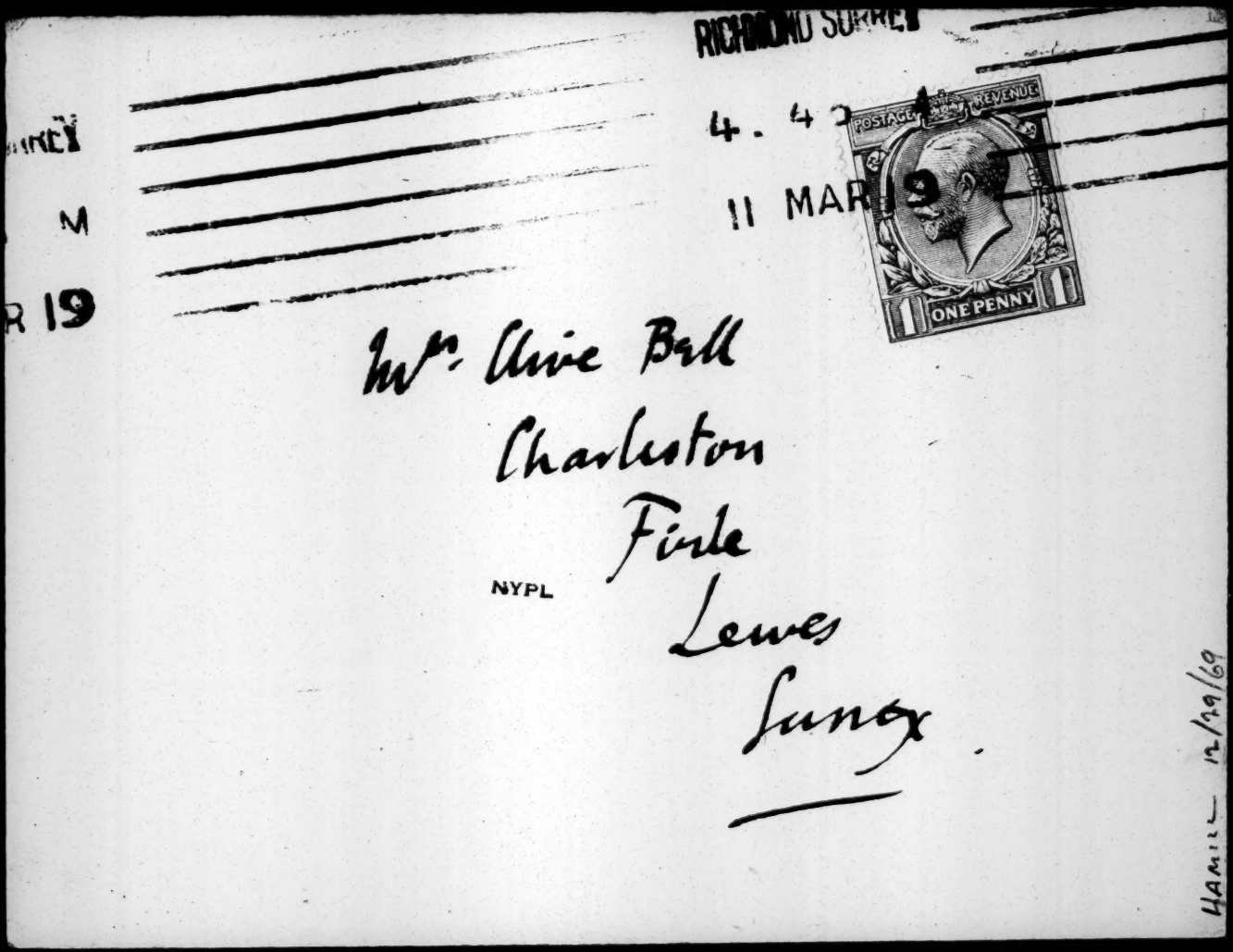
Lesley – but I must stop having worn my pen to a tenuous thread of wire.

Let me know about Bo Peep, as soon as you can.

V B.

NYPL

HAMILL 12/29/69


RICHMOND SURREY
4. 42
11 MAR 19
POSTAGE & REVENUE
ONE PENNY
Mrs. Clive Bell
Charleston
Firle
Lewes
Sussex
NYPL
HAMILL 12/29/69

Hogarth.

Do you by any chance want
to let Charleston for April –
May? The Bruce Richmonds
want to know. If so,
would you send me a line
at once, saying rent; but
I don't suppose you do.

V. W.

We've now been given notice by
Hoper. – he can't let us the Farm
so do enquire for houses & see
if we have a chance. How is
Griselda, Theresa, Bridget?